

Linda Lentini
5 Betsy Road
Plainville CT 06062
llentini@advocacyunlimited.org

H.B. 5531 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CARE AND TREATMENT OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

My name is Linda Lentini and I am here to oppose HB 5531 an act concerning the care and treatment of persons with a mental illness or substance use disorder. I live in Plainville CT and I am a member of the Advocacy Unlimited community.

In an article titled "Involuntary Outpatient Commitment Myths and Facts" by the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery it states that there is "No evidence that using court orders to mandate outpatient treatment is effective". It also states "There is ample evidence that intensive services provided on a voluntary basis can bring tremendous improvements in outcomes such as reduced hospitalizations, reduced arrests, longer tenure in stable housing, and reduced symptoms..."

As we revisit this law again we are still talking about the same basic human right violations. This bill violates a person's right to choose and it is only imposed on people that are already subjected to discrimination and marginalization by society. People like myself who have been fighting for the right to be treated the same by society.

As far as I know we have, Under the Bill of Rights, the Ten Original Amendments: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures,"

Let's look at other impacts this bill will have on people besides the clear violation and explore how traumatizing force is on a person. We currently have a high number of individuals, some say 99% of people, that are incarcerated and hospitalized that have been traumatized at some point in their life.

Traumatic experiences happen in everyone's life. People cope with life in different ways. If you don't believe me just watch the news and let me know how traumatic just watching the news is to a person's overall mental health. How do you cope after hearing public testimony all day? What if someone came along and told you how you had to cope and forced that option on you? I won't even mention the political arena right now.

Trauma is defined as "a deeply distressing or disturbing experience" by Google. Imagine how it will totally change how safe a person feels in society to have medication forced on them? How would you feel? How would you feel being forced to take a medication you didn't believe helped you? Many people have clear beliefs about the medications that are being used especially in the mental health world.

The final point I would like to make is how many other less intrusive methods have we really explored in our state? How many people have been introduced, after their traumatic experiences, to yoga, meditation, and other mind/body healing techniques? There is clear evidence that calm our mind and body have a direct impact on our lives. Have we really explored all less intrusive and expensive methods?

Just to recap, this is a direct violation of basic human rights, will traumatized people like myself that have already been marginalized and discriminated against and is not the less intrusive and expensive way.